

NORTH PROVIDENCE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Citizen Commendation and Complaint Procedure

*Mayor Charles A. Lombardi
Director of Public Safety*

*Colonel John J. Whiting
Chief of Police*

We are committed to providing a safe and orderly environment in our Town through professionalism, dedication, and active partnerships with the community, and concern for individual dignity.

This information has been prepared to acquaint you with the operation of the North Providence Police Department citizen commendation and complaint process.

The mission of the department is really quite simple – to earn and protect the public trust.

The men and women of the department understand that our greatest resource and asset is the support and assistance given by the community we serve. Naturally, this relationship, or “partnership” as we think of it, with the citizens of North Providence is something we must constantly strive to protect. This is a responsibility shared by every member of the department and it is the primary task of the citizen complaint process.

Here are some of the most common questions and concerns expressed by the public about the citizen’s commendation and complaint process.

COMMENDATIONS

When a commendation is received verbally, it will be documented and forwarded through the chain of command to the Chief of Police. Letters of commendation from citizens are posted for all department employees to view. The employees of the North Providence Police Dept. appreciate the effort and consideration of concerned citizens who take the time to commend our employees.

HOW DO I MAKE A COMPLAINT?

Complaints will be accepted from any source and may be made anonymously, in person, or by telephone. While the department does accept anonymous complaints, an investigation generally cannot proceed based solely on anonymous uncorroborated information, unless the allegation can be confirmed by an independent source. Preferably, complaints should be made in person by the individual directly concerned in the allegation against the employee. The department accepts complaints made against police officers, civilian employees, and other workers and agents of the department. A citizen can initially speak to any supervisor, or the Professional Standards Unit, about an allegation or the complaint process, but the citizen will be referred to the immediate supervisor or the Professional Standards Unit, depending upon the seriousness of the allegation. As part of the investigation, you may be asked to give a sworn statement. An appointment will be made for you, and

you are free to bring with you anyone of your choosing. You will be treated courteously and need not fear any type of intimidation or other improper behavior. When making a complaint, simply relate the facts as you know them; don't attempt to add to or embellish your complaint, and be mindful that you will be asked specific questions regarding factual information

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I MAKE A COMPLAINT?

If the complaint is for a serious matter, such as unnecessary or excessive use of force, false arrest or violation of a specific criminal statute, the Professional Standards Unit will investigate the complaint. Less serious matters, such as rudeness, discourtesy, and minor infractions of the rules, regulations, policies or procedures will be investigated by the employee's immediate supervisor. Investigators then forward the findings to the Chief of Police. Based on the results, the complaint can either be sustained or not sustained. If sustained, the Chief of Police will make the final recommendation to the Director of Public Safety for the amount and type of sanction to be imposed upon the employee. Sanctions may include retraining, counseling, reprimand, suspension without pay, transfer, reassignment, demotion, and/or dismissal. All decisions involving disciplinary action will be made in conjunction with the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights.

IS SOMETHING DONE ON ALL COMPLAINTS?

Yes. All complaints are initially documented on a *Citizen Complaint Form* and thoroughly examined and investigated consistent with departmental policy and the Law Enforcement Officer's Bill of Rights.

WHAT DOES THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UNIT DO?

The Professional Standards Unit has the responsibility of investigating:

- Allegations of unnecessary force used by a member of the department in the performance of duty.
- Any allegation of criminal conduct by a member of the department.
- Allegations of false arrest.
- Allegations of serious misconduct or misbehavior.

TO WHOM DOES THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UNIT REPORT TO?

Personnel assigned to the Professional Standards Unit report directly to the Chief of Police.

WHAT HAPPENDS AFTER AN INVESTIGATION IS COMPLETED?

After your complaint has been investigated, you will be notified of the results by the investigating officer. If you are dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, or the specific finding, you may ask that another agency review the investigation. Depending on the type of allegation, you will be informed by our Professional Standards Unit of the most appropriate agency for you to contact. You should also know that making a complaint in no way limits your ability or right to pursue any other complaint forums if you feel that you have been wronged. Every complaint that involves a possible violation of a law is forwarded to the Attorney General's Department for review.

WHAT ABOUT OTHER COMPLAINTS SUCH AS DISCOURTESY OR POOR SERVICE?

These complaints are investigated by the employee's immediate supervisor and then forwarded to the Divisional Commander for recording, review, and filing.

WHAT RIGHTS DO POLICE OFFICERS AND OTHER EMPLOYEES HAVE WHEN A COMPLAINT IS MADE AGAINST THEM?

All police employees are protected under their respective labor agreements and any applicable state and Federal statutes. Additionally, police officers are also protected under the Law Enforcement Officer's Bill of Rights. These provisions provide that employees shall not be subjected to harassment, intimidation, threats from supervisors, or unreasonable periods of interrogation. They also have a right to counsel or union representation during the investigation.

IS THERE ANY RISK TO ME WHEN I MAKE A COMPLAINT AGAINST A POLICE EMPLOYEE?

No, unless you deliberately make a false complaint against an officer. In that case, you may be prosecuted criminally and/or be held civilly liable.

WILL THE POLICE REALLY BE IMPARTIAL WHEN THEY INVESTIGATE THEIR OWN OFFICERS OR EMPLOYEES?

Yes, the question goes right to the heart of what professional policing is all about. We strive to ensure quality performance from all our officers and employees who represent our department and the Town of North Providence. We want the public to know that we do not tolerate misconduct. Even perceived tolerance of employee misconduct will lead to a breakdown of the public trust which would adversely effect the ability of the police department to function properly.

DOES NORTH PROVIDENCE GET MANY COMPLAINTS ABOUT ITS POLICE OFFICERS?

No. Our officers respond to over 30,000 calls for service each year, handle over 60,000 telephone calls, and experience thousands of other service-related interactions between the public and the department's employees. Less than one-half of one percent result in complaints regarding employee's conduct and behavior.

The task of policing today's society is demanding and challenging. The North Providence Police Department will continue to demand the highest standards from its employees. Realizing that it is not possible to enforce the rules of society without incurring some animosity, we will endeavor to protect our employees from unwarranted and false complaints, and protect our citizens from unwarranted and inappropriate mistreatment. Through this entire process, we will work to maintain your trust and support and develop a real working partnership with our community.

**North Providence Police Department
Professional Standards Unit
1967 Mineral Spring Avenue
North Providence, RI 02904
(401) 232-7306 Private
(401) 233-1425 Fax**



North Providence Police Department
Commendation / Complaint Form
1967 Mineral Spring Avenue
North Providence, R.I. 02904
401-232-7306

Office Use Only:

IA#: _____

Initials: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Instructions: If you would like to praise a North Providence Police Department employee, or file a complaint against a police employee, please write legibly and fill out this form. Personal information will not be disclosed to the public, unless required by law. You can submit this form by mailing or returning it to the North Providence Police Department at the address given at the top of this page.

I wish to file a (please check one): ☐ **Commendation** (please fill out the attached sheet of paper) ☐ **Complaint**

If you are filing a complaint, indicate the type of complaint you wish to file (you must check one):

☐ **Formal Complaint:** Involves a serious allegation of misconduct, and I want my complaint officially investigated, for which discipline may be imposed, if the allegation(s) are sustained.

☐ **Informal Complaint:** Involves a minor complaint or concern, and I only want my complaint/concerns on record. I understand it will be for informational purposes only, will not be formally investigated. However the matter will be discussed with the employee(s) involved.

Information about you

LAST NAME		FIRST NAME		M.I.	DATE OF BIRTH / /
STREET ADDRESS and APT#		CITY		STATE	ZIP CODE
HOME PHONE () -	WORK PHONE () -		CELL PHONE () -		SEX <input type="checkbox"/> MALE <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE

Are you filing this on behalf of someone else? ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** *If Yes, then complete this section*

WHAT IS HIS/HER LAST NAME?	FIRST NAME	AGE	SEX <input type="checkbox"/> MALE <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE
STREET ADDRESS and APT#	CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
WHAT IS HIS/HER RELATIONSHIP TO YOU?	HOME PHONE () -	WORK / CELL PHONE () -	

Information about the incident

LOCATION OR ADDRESS OF INCIDENT			DATE OF INCIDENT / /
			TIME OF INCIDENT : AM / PM
WITNESS LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	AGE	SEX <input type="checkbox"/> MALE <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE
WITNESS ADDRESS	CITY	STATE	PHONE () -
NAME OR ID# OF OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE		NAME OR ID# OF OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE	

Nature of complaint: Check all that apply and briefly describe what happened on the attached sheet of paper

<input type="checkbox"/> Excessive and/or improper use of force	<input type="checkbox"/> Dishonesty and untruthfulness	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual harassment
<input type="checkbox"/> Brutality	<input type="checkbox"/> Violation of civil rights	<input type="checkbox"/> Workplace violence
<input type="checkbox"/> False arrest	<input type="checkbox"/> Bias-based profiling	<input type="checkbox"/> Violation of criminal statutes
<input type="checkbox"/> Unlawful search and/or seizure	<input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate conduct and/or behavior, such as rudeness, discourtesy, and offensive language	<input type="checkbox"/> Violation of Department or Town policies, procedures or rules
<input type="checkbox"/> Corruption	<input type="checkbox"/> Department procedures or tactics	<input type="checkbox"/> Gross Insubordination

I attest that the above information is true and correct to the best of my recollection

Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

☐ The citizen has been provided with a copy of this form and a *Commendation/Complaint* brochure

FOR DEPARTMENT USE ONLY: To be completed by the Supervisor or Unit receiving or initiating a complaint

✓	CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<input type="checkbox"/>	CLASS 1	Allegations that have the potential of damaging the reputation of the Department or its personnel and generally include, but are not limited to, allegations of serious misconduct, serious violations of <i>Standards of Conduct</i> and other written directives, or criminal conduct.
<input type="checkbox"/>	CLASS 2	Allegations that generally include, but are not limited to, allegations of a non-serious nature and violations of <i>Standards of Conduct</i> and other written directives of a non-serious nature.
<input type="checkbox"/>	CLASS 3	Minor complaints by a citizen desiring to make an informal complaint against an employee of a minor nature, generally involving an employee's conduct and/or behavior.
<input type="checkbox"/>	CLASS 4	Minor complaints by a citizen who contacts the Department questioning or informally complaining about a procedure or tactic used by the Department or its employees

Signature of Supervisor receiving / initiating the complaint

OFFICER: _____ ID#: _____ DATE: ____ / ____ / ____

Forward this report to your on-duty Unit / Watch Commander for review

Signature of Unit / Watch Commander

OFFICER: _____ ID#: _____ DATE: ____ / ____ / ____

Forward this report to the Professional Standards Unit after review by the Unit / Watch Commander

To be completed by the Professional Standards Unit

✓	CASE ASSIGNED TO	DATE ASSIGNED	DATE COMPLETED
<input type="checkbox"/>	UNIT / SHIFT LEVEL		
<input type="checkbox"/>	PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UNIT		
<input type="checkbox"/>	NO INVESTIGATION NEEDED (3 or 4 only)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	COMMENDATION ONLY		

To be completed by the Chief of Police

✓	FINDING (Refer to G.O. 52.1.9)	DATE COMPLETED
<input type="checkbox"/>	EXONERATED	
<input type="checkbox"/>	UNFOUNDED	
<input type="checkbox"/>	NOT SUSTAINED	
<input type="checkbox"/>	SUSTAINED	
<input type="checkbox"/>	MISCONDUCT NOT BASED ON ORIGINAL COMPLAINT	
<input type="checkbox"/>	COMPLAINT WITHDRAWN	
<input type="checkbox"/>	POLICY FAILURE	

Signature of Chief of Police

CHIEF OF POLICE: _____ DATE: ____ / ____ / ____



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North Providence, R.I. 02904
401-232-7306

Office Use Only:

IA#: _____

Initials: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Instructions: Please describe what happened on this sheet of paper.

I attest that the above information is true and correct to the best of my recollection

Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____